AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method implemented by a security module in a computing device of performing a password-protected secure function, said method comprising:

storing authentication indicia for authenticating ~~data~~ password entry screens to a user in a memory of the computing device;

receiving a command to execute a password-protected secure function;

temporarily halting execution of programs not needed by the security module while the data entry screen is displayed;

prompting the user to enter a password associated with the secure function by displaying a ~~data~~ password entry screen containing the authentication indicia responsive to receiving the command;

removing the data entry screen from the display;

restarting halted programs after the password entry screen is removed from the display; and

executing the password-protected secure function based on the validity of the password entered by the user.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein storing authentication indicia recognized by said user in said computing device comprises storing said authentication indicia in a security module.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein displaying said ~~data~~ password entry screen containing said authentication indicia comprises displaying said authentication indicia for a limited time.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising obtaining said authentication indicia from said user.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising halting execution of programs running on said computing device not necessary for inputting said password while said ~~data~~ password entry screen is displayed.

6. (Canceled)

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein temporarily halting execution of programs not needed by said security module while said ~~data~~ password entry screen is displayed comprises inhibiting an operating system in said computing device from responding to interrupts not associated with said security module.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein temporarily halting execution of programs not needed by said security module while said ~~data~~ password entry screen is displayed comprises inhibiting context-switching by an operating system in said computing device to programs not needed by said security module.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein temporarily halting execution of programs not needed by said security module while said ~~data~~ password entry screen is displayed comprises:

storing a status table in random access memory used by an operating system in said computing device, each entry in said status table relating to a currently executing program and containing a status indication associated with said currently executing program;

saving current settings of said status table; and

changing said current settings so as to inhibit execution by said operating system of said programs not needed by said security module.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein temporarily halting execution of programs not needed by said security module while said ~~data~~ password entry screen is displayed comprises:

storing an alternate status table in random access memory used by an operating system in said computing device, each entry in said alternate status table relating to a program needed by said security module;

instructing said operating system to use said alternate status table while said ~~data~~ password entry screen is displayed.

11. (Currently Amended) A device for executing a password-protected secure function comprising:

a secure processor configured to receive a command to execute a password-protected secure function, and to execute a password program to obtain a password associated with the password-protected secure function from a user responsive to receiving the command;

memory operatively connected to the secure processor and configured to store authentication indicia for authenticating ~~data~~ password entry screens to the user of the device;

a display operatively connected to the secure processor; and

the secure processor configured to:

output a data entry screen containing said authentication indicia to said display;

temporarily halt execution of programs not needed by the ~~security module~~ secure processor while the ~~data~~ password entry screen is displayed;

remove the data entry screen from the display;

restart halted programs after the password entry screen is removed from the display; and

execute the password-protected secure function based on the validity of the password entered by the user.

12. (Original) The device of claim 11 further comprising a smart card containing said secure processor and said memory.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Currently Amended) The device of claim ~~13~~ 11 wherein said secure processor halts execution of programs by inhibiting an operating system from responding to interrupts not associated with said secure processor while said ~~data~~ password entry screen is displayed.

15. (Currently Amended) The device of claim ~~13~~ 11wherein said secure processor halts execution of programs by inhibiting an operating system from context-switching while said ~~data~~ password entry screen is displayed.

16. (Canceled)

17. (Currently Amended) The device of claim ~~13~~ 11 wherein said secure processor halts execution of programs not needed by said secure processor to obtain said password from said user by changing settings in a status table used by an operating system while said ~~data~~ password entry screen is displayed.

18. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 16 wherein said secure processor halts execution of programs not needed by said secure processor to obtain said password from said user by causing an operating system to use an alternate status table while said ~~data~~ password entry screen is displayed.

19. (Canceled)

20. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 11 wherein said secure processor and said memory are contained within a removable security module.

21. (Canceled)